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THE INSTITUTION AND SOME OF ITS ORIGINAL SINS

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In setting out to write upon the institution and some of its original sins, I am in danger of meeting opposition, almost at the start, from both the sociologist, or the social scientist, and the theologian. The former is not unlikely to protest against the very wide use of the term "institution" which I shall allow myself, perhaps with a philosopher's license, and the latter almost surely will think his theology, dogmatic or historical, assailed by my notion of original sinfulness. The offense to the sociologist will develop in good time, but, as to the theological heresies, there are two things to be said at once. Thus, (1) in the sense of the phrase here intended an "original sin" is just a natural limitation, an inherent condition of the thing, whatever it be, said to be sinful; and (2) such sin, or such limitation or condition, because natural or inherent, because rooted in the very reality of things, cannot possibly be supposed a wholly unmixed evil. Indeed, an original sin of anything must be a defect that the ultimate nature of things in general is ready to take upon itself, to assume responsibility for, and that must be, accordingly, not a hopeless defect, but, so to speak, a defect which somehow is pertinent and useful, and a defect, above all, for which the thing affected is forgiven or from which it is *naturally* saved. How can an *original* sin be a ground of unqualified condemnation? Its mere originality redeems it.

Certain natural inherent limitations of the institution are thus the first interest of this paper, and then, when these have been exposed, or in part even while they are being exposed, an attempt will be made to show how automatically—only this is an unpleasant word—the institution rises above its own limitations.

It sins; but, be it said, to the glory of a progressive life, and so even to its own glorification.

Now, what is an institution? It is *any* manifestly established mode of activity. Of course, this might be taken as referring to anything, definite enough to be seen, the universe over. Such a very broad view, moreover, equivalent though it be to a statement that all visible things are institutions, cannot fail to have some interest. Thales found all things water. The good Bishop Berkeley has had a hearing, though he chose to write seriously upon tar, or a concoction of tar, as the center of things. Why not, then, be as bold as such men and say without hesitation that all things are institutions? Surely, nothing can be real, "really real," that is not thus universal. Still, philosophy *is* licentious, and in this place it is well to show some restraint. More specifically, then, if not more profoundly, an institution is any manifestly established mode of activity *in the life of human society*, and as so regarded it must also be supposed to have a distinct personnel or clientage. Mr. Bosanquet says: "An institution implies a purpose or sentiment of more minds than one, and a more or less permanent embodiment of it." But, to lapse again from the narrow way, who can help wondering if *any* manifestly established mode of activity, whether in human society or elsewhere, must not imply, I cannot of course say a personnel, but a manifold clientage of some sort? Can activity in general ever be limited to any definite mode, can it ever become specific, without being the activity, not of a single individual, but of some complex or group which is as defined as the activity? Such a question, implying as it does that all true individuality is primarily versatile, possessing an active superiority to definiteness of form, and that the definite is always an aggregate, obviously concerns the chemist or the biologist as well as the sociologist; it also interests the mathematician, not to say even the metaphysician, but it is only put here, not answered. For the purposes of this paper simply to put such a question is worth while, since it indicates quite directly that the institution, specifically that the social institution, may be, if not must be, an affair of the universe itself, instead of merely an affair of human society.

Some, it is true, may even doubt if within the sphere of human life an institution is necessarily social. The definite personnel, here asserted, may not seem to them to be a real need. But, at least at this time, I shall not argue with such doubters. Simply, with Bosanquet and others, I shall consider the institution as if it did imply a more or less numerous constituency. Broader in my view, however, than most, I must still keep in mind, as indicated already, the institution's universality, or at least its possible universality, its cosmic dignity. This wider view cannot fail to deepen the meaning of whatever may appear true of the institution in human life.

In human life every institution in its very nature is addicted to these four sins: dogmatism, opportunism, materialism, and schism. A damning list, certainly; yet, to say no more, original sins have always repaid recognition, not to add careful study. Also the terms in the list are possibly overloaded with ecclesiastical associations, yet he who runs can at least reach the height of generalization from the church to the institutions that are domestic, ceremonial, industrial, political, educational, epistemological, and the like. All human institutions, then, are helplessly guilty of those four sins; the church is by no means alone in her degradation and misery; and, accepting the terms, as well as the condemnation in them, we have only to take them up in order, remembering, as we proceed, that natural inherent defects, such as these are, can hardly be altogether evil.

Dogmatism is probably the most familiar of the offenses in the list. That establishment, the setting of life to some particular manner of thought or action, cannot occur without it is all but axiomatic. Establishment assumes, or always very strongly tends to assume, the self-worth, the essentially intrinsic worth, of whatever it affects. Establishment isolates and exalts; it abstracts; it hypostasizes; with its first assertion it creates a distinction, more or less invidious, between some particular thing and all other things; and this distinction, so strong in tendency, grows sharper and sharper and may end, as so often it has ended, in a seemingly impossible chasm between the immediate and the only mediate, the worthy and the essentially different and un-

worthy, even between—for so the words come to be applied—the supernatural and the merely natural. Yes, in fact, if not in word, the supernatural is always a conceit of the institution, and so plainly it is the inspiration, for good or for ill, of the institution's dogmatism. Could anything be more logical than that an institution, as something manifestly established and in so far self-assertive, should in the first place be arbitrary and in the second place hold itself aloof, which is to say, find sanction for itself in a sphere apart from all other things? So, to repeat, establishment makes and must make what it touches supernatural, and just on this account it leads and must lead to what all men are accustomed to know as dogmatism, to unreasoning creed and cherished cult; subjecting, as also it must, impulses to the tyranny of form, natural experience to imposed authority, even reason to faith. As regards the last subjection there never was and never could be an institution by which reason was not reduced to a mere handmaid. *Intellectus ecclesiae ancilla* is as much a law as a special case having special social and historical references. Indeed, in all her history the church has never seriously taught or practiced anything, the enslavement of reason or anything else, that has not been essentially true to life at large. Supernaturalism, revelation, reason the servant of faith, and all her other great tenets, except for their confining and obscuring names, that are confining more through their associations than through their essential meaning, are as broad and deep as life itself. In so far as anywhere or in any way given to definite habits, customs, forms, life cannot do without those tenets; and although thus to recognize them as so general in their character and meaning, and consequently to think of the church as only a special institution that has abstracted and idealized just these underlying conditions of all institutions, is radically to change the value they have had for many people, nevertheless the conclusion seems unassailable. Whether the church gain or lose by the change is not the question, although many are sure to raise it. Turning, then, to that with which we are concerned and speaking quite abstrusely, to assert the definite in any way or sphere is to set it aloof and to place all that adhere to it in just so far out of touch

and sympathy with what remains of the life from which it has taken form; and such assertion, clearly tending strongly toward the formation of some social caste, is the very essence of dogmatism, an original sin of any institution. Habits, customs, laws, creeds, social classes, doctrines or methods of science, organic forms, and all things else in the world of what is manifest and definite are institutions and dogmatic. They set aloof and exalt. They find sanction, as it were, in another world. They are no sooner asserted, or established, than, lost in their own conceit, they fall out with positive experience.

And dogmatism leads directly to something else; it leads to the second original sin, the sin of opportunism. Possibly a more suitable, although somewhat bolder, name for this is Machiavellism, which implies, however, greater sophistication. Machiavelli will be remembered as one often classified in histories as an anti-ecclesiastical political philosopher. But, whatever Machiavelli's character or temper, and whatever be the better name for the sin now in question, the offense itself springs from the fact that any dogmatic assertion of immediacy and intrinsic worth promptly warrants the use of any means whatsoever, adequate or not, that may be at hand, for the attainment or the maintenance of the asserted end. Moreover, the originality or besetting character of this sin is shown in the fact that under all the circumstances no means at hand can ever be wholly adequate to any asserted end. Any institution is simply condemned *ipso facto* to some compromise with the presented means to its support, and such compromise is opportunism or Machiavellism. Let something be asserted as final, and henceforth, under such dogmatism, all other things will be taken as in some way intended for its service. The end being settled, the particular thing in life to be maintained at any cost being determined once for all, such considerations as scrupulous adaptation of the means employed to the end in view, sympathy of nature between them, or possible degradation or exaltation of the one by the other, become quite impertinent. In short, with just the meaning that has long been attached to the words, given a dogmatic institution, "the end justifies the means;" while, as was sug-

gested and as is especially important to be remarked, no means available can ever be literally and unqualifiedly adequate to the demand. However startling the statement may be at first sight, no one will really question that in all the world there is no single thing, no manner of existence, no specific way or form of life, natural or human, social or personal, which can find anywhere means that are unequivocally serviceable to its faithful expression and preservation. Again, the preservation of any single thing must always, not merely require a certain amount of arbitrariness and dogmatism, but also exact some measure of compromising, or temporizing; and this, if unconscious, we know as opportunism; if conscious and voluntary, as Machiavellism. Perhaps faithful preservation of anything is at best only temporary, and so more apparent than real; perhaps in all the world never a user, however arbitrary and masterful, goes unused; but this possibility only gives additional emphasis to the necessary compromises of any institution.

The church is the institution whose opportunism, or Machiavellism, is most commonly attacked. At a very critical time in history Machiavelli himself was, or at least very significantly may be said to have been, one of her aptest pupils. But again, the church is as far from having a monopoly of this offense as of anything else. Industries; governments, political parties, scientific and philosophical theories, theses of all sorts, that exist of course to be proved, personal characters, and so on indefinitely, have all been tainted with opportunism, with the more or less conscious, arbitrary use of inappropriate, inadequate means. The pecuniary support of some, perhaps all, religious or educational institutions, the many practices in social and in personal life, which are so honeycombed with what is artificial and casuistic, and the often legally correct but decidedly questionable methods of commerce, afford familiar and telling illustrations; and the taint to which they point is original and inevitable, being intrinsic to establishment, to dogmatic assertion everywhere. Perhaps the taint does not tell the whole story, but there can be no doubt about the taint.

Opportunism involves materialism, the third original sin of

the institution. Is there any word so hard to hold to a single meaning as this word "materialism"? Yes, there is possibly one other, the word "idealism." Here, however, contrary to what may be feared, reference is not to any mere metaphysical theory, although in the next paragraph a word or two will be said of the theory of matter as an ultimate substance, but only to the practical "ism." Any resort to means that are at all external to the end pursued, or that are in any measure inadequate or inappropriate or tainted, is essentially materialistic. Moreover, as such resort always rests on the presumption, so natural to an institution, that some single phase or detail of life and experience, some specific interest and established mode of action, has intrinsic worth—which is to say, has in itself the value of the whole of life—this practical materialism may be described also as the habit of treating, or the disposition to treat, some single part of life as if it were the final and self-sufficient whole.¹ Any institution, therefore, just because naturally assertive of some part as if it were the whole, and because naturally dependent on means not altogether adapted, and that can accordingly be used only with some Machiavellian violence, is *originally* sinful or guilty of materialism.

As for the metaphysical theory, the theory that matter is an ultimate substance, perhaps even the only substance, I must say, as if in a parenthesis, that metaphysical materialism seems to be nothing more or less than a generalization from, an abstraction of, all that is mediate or instrumental in life. It is such a generalization supplemented by an institutive treatment, or hypostasis, of the thing abstracted. Idealism, on its side, would then be, as indeed not infrequently has been recognized, only a corresponding abstraction and hypostasis of the end as opposed to the means, of the ideal as opposed to the "materially" real. Historically, every materialism has had its idealism to combat. But plainly, so understood, the metaphysical theory of materialism affords an illustration, though possibly a somewhat subtle one, of the practical "ism." In fact, the metaphysician practices

¹ See an article, "History and Materialism," in which this latter notion of materialism is specially emphasized (*American Historical Review*, July, 1905).

materialism, whether in his dogmatic theory he is materialist or idealist; for from one side or the other he makes an abstraction, and in support of his chosen thesis he uses and does violence to what he has rejected.

But the sins of metaphysics are not specially in question at this time, though metaphysics may be as much in need of conviction as any other department of human life. In the sense now presented, the institution at large is naturally materialistic; and, in view of this charge, if charge it should be called, an objection is quite likely to be brought against what has been said here. Thus, how can the institution be guilty of both supernaturalism and materialism? Without argument of the matter, let some illustrations give their own ready answer to this question. Consider, first, the property greed of the mediaeval, not to say also of the modern, church. Consider, secondly, the hidden sensuality of all hyper-spiritual movements. Consider, thirdly, the dependence of all kings "by divine right" on physical might, on armies and capital punishment and arbitrary, which is to say physical, authority in every form. And consider also the strange logic, by which in moral experience an unworldly rigorism promptly reacts into gross worldliness; by which the confidently unworldly have fewest defenses against the snares of the world when these are really encountered; or by which, in political experience, party fealty seems always to bring some form of compromise and corruption. Indeed, an open, clearly avowed materialism, like that of the opportunist Machiavelli, has much to learn from the hidden and unconfessed practices of its seeming opponent, the materialism of the dogmatic, idealistic, consciously supernaturalistic institution. How piously have kings looked up to God as they have led out their destroying armies! How positively the morally confident, soul-supported person has exclaimed, "I will," only in the end to prove his own betrayer, or "I will not," only to go forth at once to do what he seemed so firmly and so finally to have set himself against! The conceit of supernaturalism, then, even when reinforced, as so often it is, by explicit relegation of all that is material to the region of the illusory and unreal, is no safeguard against materialism; rather

it is the certain danger, and, in the case of the open treatment of the natural and material as illusory, it is in the hopeless and helpless state of the boy who had cried "Wolf! Wolf!" when there was no wolf. In short, supernaturalism and materialism are inseparable; so inseparable that the latter, what with its compulsion, its arbitrary coercions and all, is but the incarnation of the former; and, naturally and originally, every institution is guilty, not of one or the other, but invariably of both.

So the third sin of the institution has now been exposed. The institution is dogmatic, and therefore uncritical toward the means it employs; it is uncritical, or opportunistic, and therefore given to depending on means that are physical or material, that are external to the end and in so far inadequate; and just this dependence is its materialism. This materialism, however, does not conclude the record of the sins. A fourth, original, like the others, and springing up especially in connection with the materialism, remains to be considered; namely, the sin of schism. The institution out of its assertion and self-importance may pray earnestly for deliverance "from all sedition, privy conspiracy, and rebellion; from all doctrine, heresy, and schism;" but, whatever value or utility the prayer may have, the assertion itself can only make it perpetually necessary. Dogmatism, opportunism, and materialism, the great defenses of the institution, are also an earnest, if now I may use a word that will have to be qualified later, of its downfall; for they give life to those agents of destruction, always twin-born, division within and opposition without.

Now, as has been intimated, perhaps the most direct evidence of the schism that must beset every institution is in the necessary incongruity between the end and the available means and in the accompanying tendency materialistically, by deed if not by word, to put stress upon the means. Simply, by the incongruity and by the stress the institution is irresistibly led astray, becoming involved in what is not consistent with its avowed purposes. Of course, mere dogmatic assertion may be relied upon to arouse resistance, and so to stir up doubts among its own warmest advocates; and opportunism needs only to be practiced in order to grow conscious, and, if conscious, then also unsettling; but nothing

so clearly threatens the self-confidence, the integrity and consistency, of an institution and its various claims as an evident discrepancy between the end avowed and the means employed. Let this discrepancy merely arise, as it always must, and be observed, as also it must, and division and opposition are sure to follow.

Division and opposition are unavoidable, because means, if not fully accordant with the end for which they are used, are certain to suggest either a new significance for the accepted end or to demand a different end. Again, discordant means, upon being employed, must exalt or they must degrade the end which they are supposed to serve; and, doing so, they will call coincidentally for both reform and attack, and for these both from within and from without. Simply, "the end justifies the means," but the necessary violence of the means brings new significance to the end. Whence, to introduce now two familiar terms, the life of the institution, through the native conditions of its expression, is always constrained to harbor two conflicting movements, conservatism and liberalism, the two swords, or the two-edged sword, of all schism, the former tending fatally toward the formal and conventional, and the latter toward the radical. Moreover, the necessary appearance of these two movements and tendencies will suggest why division and opposition were but just now said to be twin-born. Quite abstractly put, any specific assertion implies, as it were in its own right or in the conditions of its own rise, positive resistance from things without, and by reason of its dependence beyond itself also inner division against itself. Between the liberal movement without the life of an institution and the liberal movement within the difference can be only one of degree, lying perhaps only in the consciousness and candor with which the attack is conducted. The inner movement, too, is in itself an invitation and cue to the outer movement, if the reverse be not also true. Indeed, the two comprise a sort of natural, though unrecorded, partnership for the accomplishment of just one object—evolution of the institution affected, and coincident revision or reinterpretation of its end.

That there is this partnership, or quasi-partnership, is indicated also by the following. In the life of institutions, say

specifically of political or ecclesiastical institutions, how commonly, if not universally, the opposition makes use of means that the institutions themselves have actually developed and, as it were, placed upon the market, with accompanying directions about their use, for the general consumer. The French Revolution is the stock illustration of this. Spartacus' speech, whether really his or not, so familiar to every schoolboy, is a good statement of it. Machiavelli's anti-ecclesiastical advocacy of the very intrigue to which the church had become so conspicuously addicted shows the same thing; and shows it in a way peculiarly interesting here, since the schism and the numerous incidents of the schism now under examination have been seen to be involved in what was virtually referred to as the natural or innate Machiavellism of every institution. The scientific reply to the creation-alistic theology of the priority of spirit with an equally creation-alistic doctrine of the priority of matter is also a case in hand, although possibly not so generally apparent. And, to stride into a field even more difficult and remote, the poetry of Whitman, so offensive to institutional, conventional ideas of morality, in its opposition only uses material that is plainly present in the minds of the very preachers and teachers whom it has shocked so deeply. Many there are who would prefer Whitman to the conventional moralist's morbid and, if morbid, often prurient consciousness of the sensuous. Is Whitman's poetry, particularly so far as dealing with questions of sex, any less wholesome than so-called purity clubs or than prayer-meetings for one sex only? Moreover, for morality Whitman, who only offends in the way of all radicals, does but do what sooner or later has to be done for every institution. To use a metaphor, perhaps too suggestive in his case, he tears off the old clothing, which moral man has been wearing, as he believes, too long, and takes measurements, with the scientific accuracy so appropriate to the age, for a new suit. At the time the exposure may be thought indecent; but, without meaning to defend all that Whitman has done or written, I have to think it both necessary and serviceable. The dangers of it are certainly no greater than those of morbid brooding over hidden, but not less real, facts; and, however offensive and

indecent, it is the simple fate, which must be inspired with some useful purpose, of every establishment. As there can be no establishment without some concealment, the institution always being a sort of study in chiaroscuro effects, so there can be no concealment, no indirectness, finesse, or intrigue, that sooner or later must not give way to exposure. Remember the eighteenth century. What was its so-called "enlightenment" but a general exposure, indecent and offensive, reckless and rationalistic, of the institutions of the time? But, to conclude this list of illustrations, the poetry of Whitman suggests the much-discussed conflict between art in general and morals—and in this conflict there is additional evidence for the matter in review. Art has usually had more reserve than is commonly found in the writings of Whitman, but all real art is alive with the same tendencies. All real art shows the human in process of being gifted to the natural; the forms and conventions of human establishment becoming the play, the instruments, of life at large. In all real art we can invariably detect the materialism of some institution on the point, at least on the point, of throwing off its conventional disguise. Art—Greek art, for example, or the art of the Renaissance—does but forerun a new dispensation, and in its own time and way it is itself at variance with the traditional order, because, whether avowedly in the opposition or not, it is quick with the schism of the existing institutions, which is to say with the manifest use of the incongruous material, that indeed the institutions themselves have always used, but as if under lock and key. So Greek art transformed patriotism into cosmopolitanism; and the art of the Renaissance, Roman Catholicism into Protestant Christianity.

From all these illustrations it appears that the liberal movement within an institution and the liberal, or radical, movement without, cannot be as distinct as they are sometimes supposed to be. They both employ, only with different degrees of freedom and candor, the same instruments; and doing this they also are both only exposing the lock-and-key methods, the *arcana imperii*, of the institution. They are, then, as said, in a very real sort of partnership, and their partnership shows, as said

also, that division and opposition, always incident to schism, are not two independent movements. The outside opposition is, so to speak, only an important factor in, or a natural incident of, the inside division; it is never just a coincident, but independent attack. Not only, therefore, are the two partners, but also neither one is ever active without the other being so too. The partnership is as original and essential as the schism that it serves. In the terms of personnel, the slavish loyalist and the loyal reformer, on the one hand, and the hostile, though not hopeless, revolutionist and the destructive uncompromising anarchist, on the other hand, are all four parties to the natural disruption of the institution, being, each one of them, in some way and measure committed to the inevitable and inevitably disintegrating materialism; the first two, of course, from within, the other two from without. Of the two extremes in the group, the loyalist and the anarchist, the former is describable as blind to his actual materialism and radicalism; the latter, as equally blind to his implied loyalty. But subtleties of this sort, not less humorous than profound, are unnecessary to the task in hand; only, for him who cares to reflect upon them further, they do suggest what may be the meaning of the invisible, as opposed to the visible, institution. The invisible church, for example, has been either the subtle rational theology, and all the other worldly methods and instruments, with which the church of dogma, *openly* appealing, not to reason, but to faith, not to nature and matter, but to God and spirit, has been mysteriously maintained; or the implicit faith, that truly and actually passeth understanding, of the avowed skeptic and atheist. The schism of the visible institution is thus the very life of the invisible institution.

But now the four carnal offenses, which were to be exposed, have been set forth. Dogmatism, opportunism, materialism, and schism, with all their various incidents, manifestly are sins of the institution, and, in spite of them, if not actually by dint of them, an institution must have or get whatever of worth and virtue may possibly belong to it. Perhaps, as one runs over in his mind all the mean acts, the cruelties and deceptions, the destruction and the treachery, in which one or another of these

sins has found expression, the chance of discovering any worth or virtue will seem very small indeed. Sins always do produce diseases, and, accordingly the life of human society, bound as it is to expression through institutions, may promise to be of interest rather to a social pathologist, wholly morbid in his point of view, than to an idealist or optimist; for is it not conclusive that, given institutions, there must be crimes? Looking, then, to institutional society, we seem to see only either dishonest loyalty or open and destructive violence; which is to say, either hidden crime or public crime. Some, indeed, may imagine they find something else; the life and attitude, for example, of those who consciously say to themselves that the end justifies the means; but here is only a compromise between the two extremes, not anything new or significantly different; and, whether different or not, it can hardly be said to improve the view. And yet there is still left the possibility that what the author of the *Fable of the Bees* said of his hive is really true of human society:

Every part was full of vice;
The whole mass a paradise.

Fortunately, one can find truth in these words without assuming the spirit of Mandeville himself. Thus, there is a fact, to which history, always about as humorous as it is reassuring, bears constant witness, and to which also the argument of this paper has been leading by no very difficult route; this fact, namely, as simple as its figurative statement is commonplace: Institutions always make strange bed-fellows. In the deeper meaning of this commonplace truth, which is as serious to life as it is amusing, and which suggests Mandeville's mingling of vice with whatever is worth while, must lie whatever chance remains for an optimistic view of the institution.

Yes, institutions always make strange bed-fellows. In history, this amounts to saying, wherever an institution takes form, just there wisdom and folly, honesty and dishonesty, lawfulness and lawlessness, are made strangely intimate even to the point of comedy. Life and death are not more intimate, whenever life is expressed through some definite and manifest structure. In history, at a very critical period, thanks only to the institutions, or

to the "law," a reformer and some thieves were crucified together, although—perhaps because—the institutions were themselves already harboring exactly as much dishonesty as honesty, or violence as law and order. But the deeper meaning of such intimacy—just what can this be?

It is the meaning, already proposed, of original sins being redeemed or redeemable by their very originality, except that what was said needs now to be supplemented in two important respects. Such sins, it will be remembered, were declared always to repay study; and this just because they cannot be supposed pure or unmixed. Their impurity, then, or their mixed character, is a reflection of a truth that may be put in these two important ways: (1) Reality—that is, whatever is substantial, whatever is finally true and worthy in life and for life—is and forever must be, I do not say wholly apart from what is definite and visible, but never adequately or completely presented through any definite, visible thing, such as some body of positive doctrine or some specific mode of life, some system of formulated law or some mass of customs and traditions, and (2) all things definite are, therefore, and must be, I do not say unreal, but only "relative." All things definite—that is, all institutions—are whatever they are, are worthy or unworthy, good or bad, true or false, vital or instrumental, only relatively, and for just the reason—certainly a cogent reason—that *the* real or *the* true, *the* good or *the* vital, cannot, in its very nature, be held to any visible form or body, to any name or habitation, to any residence or resting-place. Again, risking tedious repetition, all things institutional are relative for the great supreme reason—a reason which redeems even relativity from unreality—not of course that there is no reality, nor even that what reality there is does not comprise and entertain all things, but that reality can never have a single place where to lay its head. The definite, then, which is the institutional and which is necessarily always relative, can belong to final reality, or can truly serve what is real and worthy, not by being merely either true or false, good or bad, lawful or lawless, but only by always being mixedly either, by always being both, by always putting both in the same bed. In short, the definite or

institutional or relative, just to be real, or to possess anything which reality comprises, must always be, not simple, but mixed; not peacefully self-sufficient, but the residence of opposition and conflict; perhaps, too, not static in nature, but dynamic; say even, not merely formal and structural but also functional.

So, to every institution, its original sins; but, also, to every institution, even through violence, its part in the service of what is real, and through such service redemption of the violating sins. In general, conflict is such a sure redeemer. It saves formal virtue from its emptiness and the sin that transgresses the forms from its license. Yet many will be far from satisfied with this conclusion or explanation. To begin with, they may find it altogether too philosophically subtle. Then, if they are able to forgive the offense of subtlety, by their understanding overcoming the peculiar obstacles, they may still object to the reliance on a principle of universal relativity. Relativity, especially when made a basis of judgments about evil in any form, is very offensive, because, at least in the opinion of many, to all intents and purposes it makes whatever it touches quite unreal. Here, however, the general opinion is very plainly at fault; for, as I have been trying to make clear, the definite and relative, being always necessarily in a state of conflict, is *ipso facto* real or in touch with reality. Thus, however subtly, in just three words: (1) the relative is at least as real as the definite; (2) the definite can itself be real, or belong to what is real, only if mixed, or say only if like a house that is divided against itself, for reality is itself also opposed to any mere definition; and (3) relativity has never actually meant anything but the mixture or division or natural self-opposition of the definite. All that has been said here of the institution, or its sins, has born witness that definition involves, not only opposition, but also division, or schism; and also, only to translate a phrase that will readily be recalled, that the relativity of the visible institution, not is apart from, but *is* the reality of the invisible institution. Whence, the original sins of the institution, incident to the necessary mixture, or division, of what is definite, are real, though relative, or—why not add?—because relative; they are as real as the conflict which every institution,

every formal structure in human life, harbors, and without which none can be justified; they are as real as the "good" which is always associated with them; and they are as real as that absolute but invisible reality which dwells in the conflicts of all things definite, and which is, and can be, maintained only by these conflicts. Thus, even a universal relativism, a relativism declaring all things definite to be relative, is not by any means nihilism; it makes nothing unreal; it simply makes reality just not finally and exclusively one of the things.

But, lastly, the current evolutionary explanation of evil, or more specifically of sins, which appeals to the conditions of growth or progress, is certainly in accord with the explanation here presented. Perhaps the two are identical. I think, however, that, as commonly understood, the evolutionary explanation lacks just one idea, or at least clear recognition of one idea, which the foregoing discussion brings forward. Thus, in a very few words, it is of course quite true that growth demands instability of any structure or institution; and sins, so called, are effective agents of instability, and accordingly cannot be without positive worth. Again, growth implies change in the values of things, and this makes the distinction between the good and the bad, the worthy and the unworthy, the useful and the harmful, a shifting one, besides making both, or all, have a share in whatever is fully worth while. And, once more, under the demands of growth, evil or sin in the part may be quite consistent with the true nature and interest of the whole. All these notions, too, as arguments of the evolutionist, are so well known in these times that they do not require extensive exposition here. But are they not lacking in their appreciation of the very growth on which they rely? Do they not think of it as too radical? Are they sufficiently loyal to a principle of unity and persistence in the changing that their growth implies? Is there any institution that we must not have with us always?

The problem is, of course, a profound one, and as difficult as profound. But let me suggest, at the expense of seeming commonplace, that growth, the true growth of anything you please—a man, an institution, or an ideal—is never merely change; it is

not merely into, nor merely out of, any state or nature, as these phrases seem often, if not usually, to be taken; it is just a condition of a reality that in its very nature can be, only if not merely definite. Make reality definite, give it a pillow, and you ask it to betray its nature, to violate its depth and breadth, to undo its own true unity. Instead, then, of being the change of reality or the supposed development or evolution of reality, growth is more accurately and more safely looked upon as the persistence of reality, or even as just reality. It is reality, so thoroughly real as to be not merely incapable of any particular resting-place, or establishment, but also in a sense even without the need, and so truly one in its nature, so hospitably lawful and orderly, as to include all things definite, not of course in spite of its not being, but just by means of its not being, a single definite thing itself.

So it is by the grace of reality in this sense, or of growth in this sense, that the institution sins but to the glory of a progressive life, and even to its own glorification.